

Message Text

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53

ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AF-06

ARA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NASA-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 OIC-02 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01 OES-03 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 NRC-05 /123 W
----- 073212

R 160914Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3052

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 3060

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, SN

SECRET

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SUBJ: MULTINATIONAL NUCLEAR CENTERS: ASSESSMENT OF KEY ASIAN
COUNTRIES' ATTITUDES TOWARD PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING

REF: STATE 154049

SUMMARY. GOS INTEREST IN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY CURRENTLY CONFINED TO POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMERCIAL NUCLEAR POWER PLANT EARLY NEXT DECADE--POSSIBLY SOONER. ALTHOUGH GOS HAS NOT MENTIONED REPROCESSING IN CONNECTION WITH NUCLEAR PROJECT, HIGH INTEREST IN NUCLEAR ENERGY AND DESIRE TO BE TECHNOLOGICAL LEADER IN REGION MAKE IT LIKELY SINGAPORE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN MULTINATIONAL CENTER AND PERHAPS OFFER SITE FOR FACILITY. END SUMMARY.

1. GOS HAS BEEN STUDYING ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND ACTIVE CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR AT LEAST THE PAST TWO YEARS. ONE CONSTRAINT ON MOVING AHEAD WITH THE PROJECT HAS BEEN DIFFICULTY OF LOCATING A SUITABLE SITE, A PROBLEM COMPLICATED BY SINGAPORE'S SIZE, POPULATION DENSITY, AND PREVAILING WINDS. GOS HAS CONSULTED THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) WHICH SENT TEAM YEAR IN 1972, AND MORE RECENTLY (LATE 1974) AN AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR POWER TEAM. WE UNDERSTAND PULAU TEKONG BESAR, ISLAND NORTHEAST OF SINGAPORE AT EASTERN END OF JOHORE STRAITS, TENTATIVELY SELECTED. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO DEFINITE DECISION AS YET TO GO AHEAD WITH THE PROJECT. ALTHOUGH THE PREVAILING VIEW IS THAT IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE WELL INTO THE 1980'S, ONE US FIRM HERE, INTERESTED IN BIDDING ON THE PROJECT, BELIEVES GOS WILL ASK FOR TENDERS IN 1977.

2. THE HIGH CAPITAL AND OPERATING COSTS REQUIRED FOR A GENERATING SYSTEM TO SERVE POPULATION OF ONLY 2.2 MILLION HAVE ALSO BEEN AN INHIBITING SOURCE OF CONCERN. WE UNDERSTAND GOS MOST INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING TWO OF SMALLEST VERSION NEW GENERATION LIGHT WATER REACTORS. GOS ALSO INTERESTED IN POSSIBILITY OF GAS REACTORS. ONE WOULD PROBABLY BE SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE CURRENT AND NEAR TERM ELECTRICITY NEEDS. SECOND WOULD BE NEEDED FOR BACKUP AND FUTURE EXPANSION.

3. SUBJECT OF URANIUM ENRICHMENT AND REPROCESSING OF PLUTONIUM WASTES (IN CONNECTION WITH NUCLEAR PLANT PROJECT) HAS NEVER
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BEEN MENTIONED AS PROBLEM TO EMBASSY BY GOS. OUR FEW DISCUSSIONS WITH GOS OFFICIALS CONNECTED WITH NUCLEAR MATTERS HAVE REFLECTED THEIR ASSUMPTION THAT ALL WASTE PRODUCTS GENERATED WOULD REVERT DIRECTLY TO COUNTRY FROM WHICH REACTORS ACQUIRED. DAO FURTHER INFORMS THAT GOS HAS SHOWN NO INTEREST IN ACQUISITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES OR IN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE. HOWEVER, DESPITE REPEATED PROMPTINGS BY THIS EMBASSY AND OTHERS, GOS HAS NEVER RATIFIED THE NONPROLIFERATION TREATY. ALTHOUGH THIS MAY BE SOLELY DUE TO NEGLECT, GOS MAY BE CONSCIOUSLY LEAVING OPTION OPEN IN EVENT NEAR NEIGHBORS LATER ACQUIRE NUCLEAR CAPABILITY FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

4. ALTHOUGH SINGAPORE HAS NO FORMAL REGULATORY ADMINISTRATIVE

ORGANIZATION, SUCH AS AN AEC, TO DEAL WITH NUCLEAR ENERGY, INTEREST IN NUCLEAR MATTERS IS QUITE HIGH. THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IS OFFICIAL BODY DEALING WITH THE IAEA. WITHIN THE MINISTRY A NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SET UP TO STUDY THE POWER PLANT PROJECT. THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (PROPOSED PRIME CONTRACTOR FOR THE PLANT) ARE ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN NUCLEAR ENERGY. THERE ARE A FEW SINGAPOREANS HIGHLY TRAINED IN NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND ENGINEERING, MOST OF THEM EMPLOYED IN THE US.

5. GIVEN GOS HIGH NUCLEAR INTEREST AND GENERAL DESIRE FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION IT WOULD SEEM LIKELY THAT GOS, ONCE IT FOCUSES ON ADVANTAGES OF A MULTINATIONAL NUCLEAR CENTER IN ASIA, WOULD PARTICIPATE. ALTHOUGH SINGAPORE HAS CERTAIN PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS, NOTED ABOVE, ITS DESIRE TO BE FORERUNNER OF TECHNOLOGY IN REGION MIGHT LEAD TO OFFER TO LOCATE SUCH A FACILITY HERE. GOS AWARENESS OF INTEREST OF ANOTHER ASEAN GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPING A MULTI-NATIONAL NUCLEAR CENTER WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE IT TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY IN PROMOTING ANY INITIATIVE OF ITS OWN, ESPECIALLY IF THE OTHER ASEAN GOVERNMENT'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM WAS ALREADY WELL LAUNCHED. GRANT

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